

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Advertisement is “a notice or film telling people about a product, job or service” (Hornby, 2010, p. 22). It can appear in several media such as television, radio, billboards, and newspapers. No matter which media is used, advertisement has one common purpose, which is to persuade people to buy and use the product or service being advertised. Chetia (2015), in her journal article entitled *Rhetorical devices in English advertisements texts in India: a descriptive study*, says advertisement can be said to be a “vital marketing tool as well as a powerful communication force” (p. 185). As a means of communication, advertisement therefore can be considered to be a producer’s channel that contains messages to inform and persuade people, specifically their target market. In order to fulfil the goal, advertisements should be created by applying appropriate persuasion techniques so that what the companies want to communicate to the target market can be delivered well.

There are several techniques to persuade consumers through advertisements, one of which is 'Pathos Formula'. Pathos is originally a persuasion technique in speech that is developed by Aristotle, who states that style is made to evoke emotion. The 'Pathos Formula', which is a persuasion technique in advertising, aims at making the advertisements evoke the emotion of the viewers (National Council of Teacher Education [NCTE], 2009). All elements in the advertisement, verbal, visual, even auditory ones, are carefully arranged to evoke the emotion of the viewers. According to Eckler (2011), some advertisements are designed to evoke negative emotion in order to be sensational and become viral (p. 23). Therefore, the design, diction, model, and other aspects of an advertisement are creatively and selectively exploited in order to expose the emotion.

Furthermore, as a marketing tool, advertisement plays a role as a representation of its brand. It means that advertisements communicate the brand image "which refers to consumers' general perception and it is also influencing consumers' idea, act or behavior" (Zhang, 2015, p. 56). Therefore, advertisement can be powerful in shaping how the consumers think of the brands and the products or services being represented. This will lead them to act and buy the products or use the services; also conduct the consumers' behavior towards the brand. In other words, advertisement can create consumers' consciousness. This consciousness can be shown in praxis, for example, the fashion we are keen on, the choice of jeans, apparels and any products that we wear or choose to use. The decision to buy and use certain things is the forms of collective behavior formed by advertisement which we see in daily life (Berger, 2011, p. 82).

One of the tools that can be used to analyze advertisements is semiotics. Semiotics, according to Saussure (1916), is the study of signs. He states that every sign consists of its signifier and signified. The semiotics theory of Saussure is expanded by Barthes, who explores a sign meaning into first and second layers. According to Barthes as stated in Berger (2011), the first layer consists of a signifier and a signified. The signifier and the signified will form the denotative meaning of the first layer. In the second layer, the denotative meaning becomes the connotative signifier and will have a connotative signified, which will then form the connotative meaning (p. 133).

In this thesis, I will analyze a fitness center advertisement to reveal the positive representation of the woman depicted in the advertisement. I will use Saussure's theory to reveal the first layer, and the semiotics theory of Barthes in the second layer. I will also use post-modernist feminist point of view in analyzing the representation.

As the data, I choose an advertisement of Equinox, a luxurious fitness club headquartered in the U.S. with its slogan "COMMIT TO SOMETHING". Equinox is famous for its controversial and absurd advertisements. I am interested in analyzing Equinox advertisement that appeared in 2016 in some areas in the U.S. According to some commentaries, the advertisement is considered controversial because it evokes negative feeling of the viewers. According to White (2016) in news article online, the advertisement which shows a woman breastfeeding two babies at the same time in a luxurious restaurant bothers the

viewers, because it is unusual for a woman to breastfeed her baby in a public place (para. 4).

In my opinion the negative commentary to the advertisement reflects unfairness in gender. The idea that breastfeeding in public is unethical shows restriction to women to do what they think is right: breastfeed her baby (Shaw, 2016. para. 4). Thus, in doing the analysis of the data, I relate my discussion to the women's rights. I base my analysis to feminism theory specifically feminism in the third wave era (1990-2014), which focuses on the struggle of a woman to be free in doing what she thinks is right.

The study is significant as it makes people aware that advertisement can communicate more than just persuasion to buy a product or service. Thus, by discussing the topic "Positive Woman Representation in Equinox's Advertisement", people can also be aware that women, as models in advertisements, can be represented in a positive way in order to persuade target consumers.

(Words: 877)

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The problems discussed in this thesis are:

1. What is the denotative meaning of the advertisement?
2. What is the connotative meaning of the advertisement related to woman representation?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The thesis is done:

1. to show the denotative meaning of the advertisement.
2. to show the connotative meaning of the advertisement related to woman representation.

1.4 Methods of Research

The method applied for the research is library research. First of all, I decided to choose one topic in linguistics to be discussed, which is semiotics and I found theories related to it. Next I searched for some advertisements for the data and selected one of them to analyze. After that, I decided what issue to be discussed in the advertisement and looked for information about it both from printed and electronic sources. Then I analyzed the data and finally I wrote my thesis.

1.5 Organization of the Thesis

The thesis consists of four chapters. Chapter One is Introduction, which contains Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the Study, Methods of Research, and Organization of the Thesis. The second chapter of this thesis is Theoretical Framework, which explains the approach used to analyze the data. The third chapter is the analysis of the advertisement. The fourth chapter is the conclusion, where I write the concluding remarks, some suggestions and comments on the findings. The thesis ends with Bibliography and Appendices.